

REMARKS

Claim 7 has been amended to change “fluoro-polymerized” to “fluoro-polymerised.” No new matter has been added, and entry of the Amendment is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5 and 7-10 are pending.

Applicants note with appreciation that claims 1-5 are allowed.

Claims 7-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Carlson (US RE 32,199).

This rejection should be withdrawn because Carlson does not disclose or render obvious the present invention.

Present claim 7 relates to a fluoro-polymerised material comprising a fluoropolymer. The fluoropolymer is one of which polymer terminal groups are $\text{-CF}_2\text{H}$ and not more than 20 unstable terminal groups (Q) per 10^6 carbon atoms. The fluoro-polymerised material does not substantially contain a metal residue containing an alkali metal element and/or alkaline earth metal element, and the fluoro-polymerised material has a volatile matter index of not higher than 15.

However, the polymer formed by the process disclosed by Carlson has more than 20 unstable terminal groups (Q) per 10^6 carbon atoms, and therefore does not meet the limitation of claim 7 which requires “not more than 20 unstable terminal groups (Q) per 10^6 carbon atoms.” See Tables I, II, III and IV of Carlson. Namely, the polymer of Carlson is not sufficiently stabilized.

Therefore, present claims 7-10 are patentable over Carlson.

In view of the above, reconsideration and withdrawal of the §102(b) rejection based on Carlson are respectfully requested.

Claims 7-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § “102(b)” [103(a)] as being unpatentable over Buckmaster (US 5,045,605).

This rejection should be withdrawn because Buckmaster does not disclose or render obvious the present invention.

The fluoro-polymerised material of claim 7 can be produced by the production method of claim 1. In the production method of claim 1, a melt-processable fluoropolymer (A) is subjected to melt-kneading in a kneader comprising a stabilization treatment zone. Applicants at page 13, lines 8-15 of the specification disclose:

The inside pressure in the stabilization treatment zone is preferably increased. By increasing the pressure, it becomes possible to reduce the partial pressure of the high-temperature volatile components to be removed and/or promote the penetration of the optionally introduced oxygen into the composition under melt-kneading and, as a result, increase the efficiency of removal of the high-temperature volatile components.

Since the production method of claim 1 has a high efficiency of removing high-temperature volatile components, the fluoro-polymerised material of claim 7 has a volatile matter index of not higher than 15.

In contrast, although Buckmaster discloses heating a fluoropolymer at a temperature of about 160 to 400°C (col. 6, lines 27-30 and col. 7, lines 1-3), Buckmaster does not teach or suggest that the fluoropolymer is subjected to melt-kneading in a kneader comprising a stabilization treatment zone.

As a result, the fluoropolymer obtained by polymerization as in Examples 4 and 5 of Buckmaster contains low-molecular-weight components generated during polymerization. Even

when heating the fluoropolymer, removal of the low-molecular-weight components is not sufficient. Therefore, the fluoropolymer of Buckmaster has a high volatile matter index expected to be well outside the scope of claim 7 which requires a volatile matter index of not higher than 15.

In view of the above, present claims 7-10 are patentable over Buckmaster. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the “§102(b)” rejection based on Buckmaster are respectfully requested.

Allowance of claims 7-10 is respectfully requested. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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Respectfully submitted,

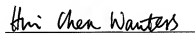
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